

The Relationship between Teachers' Self-Disclosure and EFL Students' Motivation for Class Participation

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Abstract

Teacher self-disclosure is a communication technique to improve relationships between teachers and students. More often than not, a healthy learning environment is created by the relationship between the teacher and students (Frymier & Houser, 2000). This study aimed to determine whether there are any variations between male and female students' motivation regarding the teachers' self-disclosure and to investigate the relationship between teachers' self-disclosure and EFL students' motivation for class participation. In order to accomplish these goals, 28 teachers and 108 intermediate English learners from three institutions—Andishe Sabz Ehsan Institution, Arad Institution, and Maqreb Zamin Institution—who were both male and female students were chosen to take part in the study. Data was then gathered using the teachers' self-disclosure questionnaire and the students' motivation questionnaire. The study's findings suggested a strong correlation between teachers' self-disclosure and EFL students' motivation to participate in class; however, there was no difference in motivation between male and female students concerning teachers' self-disclosure. The findings of this study suggest that TSD can be used as a teaching and career development tool by EFL instructors at schools, universities, and other English language institutions to enhance learning and motivate students to learn English most effectively.

Keywords: *Teachers' self-disclosure, EFL, Students' Motivation, Class Participation*

INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is a social activity that involves communication with others (Byrnes, 2013). Communication between students, professors, and friends during class impacts students' cognitive and emotional development (Warg & Dishior, 2012). In order to inspire students while they are studying, teachers' communication with them is a crucial component of the educational process (Punyanunt-Carter, 2006; Richmond, 1990). Teachers anticipate their

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students speaking the second language throughout class activities. Evidence suggests that teachers' communication affects students' involvement (Martin et al., 2002; Skinner & Belmont, 1993), so examining teachers' methods and communication styles to raise student engagement is critical. Self-disclosure is one of these methods. Numerous empirical research shows that teachers' self-disclosure (TSD) has a favorable impact on learning in the classroom. Teachers' self-disclosure, which is defined as the act of disclosing personal information to students in the classroom to explain the course material, supports a variety of student motivational strategies, including the effect on the teacher and course (Sorensen, 1989), the growth of favorable attitudes toward learning English, and the creation of a calm environment (Farani & Fatemi, 2014). One of education's most crucial psychological ideas is undoubtedly motivation, which contains energies and can influence behavior toward a goal (Eggen & Kauchak, 1994). It is a motivation from within and is necessary for effective performance. Combs, Luthans, Griggith, 2009; Glynn, Aultman, & Owens, 2005; Keller, 2008; Lee, 2010 see motivation as an internal psychological process that encourages students to regard learning as a valuable and taking action while achieving learning goals (Ames & Archer, 1988; Glynn et al., 2005; Keller, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation is described as the "internal processes that give behavior its energy and direction" by Reeve (2016, p. 31). According to Beck (1978), "motivation is widely concerned with the contemporaneous determinants of choice (direction), perseverance, and vigor of goal-oriented activity"(p. 24). This is in line with what is said. Language learners acquire second languages in different ways. Most of the time, while the teacher speaks in English language sessions, the pupils often remain mute and hardly ever participate. According to Palmer (1998), a teacher's ultimate goal should be to engage pupils in the material by revealing personal information about themselves to increase their enthusiasm for studying. In order to improve learning, he also says that teachers must build rapport with their students. "A good teacher must stand where personal and public intersect," he says (Palmer, 2017, p. 18). Teacher self-disclosure (TSD) is a classroom method linked to the rapport between the teacher and the students (Cooper & Simonds, 1999).

Studies on motivation in second language acquisition show that a variety of factors, including teachers, the environment in the classroom, and assessment, have an impact on student's motivation (Ghenghesh, 2010; Kikuchi, 2009; Matsumoto, 2009; Yeung et al., 2011). In other words, the importance of the teacher's role and influence in inspiring students cannot be overstated. Unfortunately, because they do not have a good rapport with the teacher, many pupils frequently lack motivation and are not allowed to participate in class activities. Demotivated children in the classroom are a significant issue for teachers everywhere. According to Dornyei (2001), "demotivation is a noticeable phenomenon in second language study in educational environments, and teachers have a significant responsibility in this regard" (p. 155). Students are physically present in class but not mentally (Hapsari, 2013). Motivation is a multidimensional part of the dynamic relationship between teachers and students, claims Haspari (2013) (p. 114). In other words, teachers and students are involved in this process as partners. In order to create a more motivating classroom environment that aids in achieving the desired learning outcomes in this context, teachers will benefit from familiarizing themselves with the most effective motivational strategies that are used by teachers and valued by students in a particular context.

A good teaching and learning process depends on effective communication between teachers and students (Punyanunt-Carter, 2006; Richmond, 1990), which inspires pupils to study harder. Teachers anticipate that their pupils will behave responsibly and participate in class activities. To do this, educators employ various methods that may inspire pupils to perform better (Richmond, 1990). Self-disclosure is one of these methods. Student engagement in class activities increases when teachers admit their shortcomings (Cayanus, 2004; Goldstein &

Benassi, 1994). It is believed to foster a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students in which pupils feel accepted, self-assured, and free to speak their minds (Allen & Court, 2009). This study aims to determine whether there is a connection between teachers' self-disclosure and students' motivation to participate in class.

According to Bhuana (2017), motivation is a key determining factor in learning a second or foreign language. Integrative and instrumental motivation are the two categories of motivation. The success of learning a second or foreign language depends on both. Unfortunately, there is some disagreement over the best type of motivation for second language learners. The study aimed to examine the student's motivation for learning English as a second language in senior high school. The research was quantitative. Students in the 12th grade at one of Bandung's senior high schools participated in this study. The study's findings indicated that senior high school students' intrinsic motivation for studying English as a second language was quite strong. From their perspective, studying English was crucial to advancing their future employment and careers.

Inayah (2021) used a descriptive methodology with various instruments, including observation, questionnaires, and interviews. Four high achievers and four low achievers from a class of STKIP Siliwangi Bandung students who were enrolled in the previous semester served as the sample for this study. The findings indicated that students' actions contributed to their speaking challenges; individuals who are not interested in speaking activities generally had more difficulty speaking for academic purposes. The study demonstrated that students who have trouble speaking frequently struggle with their drive and self-confidence, making it harder for them to perceive their genuine abilities. Many pupils see the idea of speaking English fluently favorably and with good attitudes. They believe that it is crucial to develop speaking fluency.

Yukselir (2022), using a mixed-methods study, investigated EFL learners' perspectives on learner autonomy and anxiety in foreign language classrooms. The participants were 126 EFL students from two Turkish public colleges. The results demonstrated that participants thought they should be able to assume ownership of their learning. In response to the inquiry concerning nervousness in the classroom, participants acknowledged that speaking in front of others or with English-speaking natives can cause anxiety. In addition, the data revealed that 73 pupils in their English classes were moderately nervous, compared to 13 students who felt highly apprehensive.

This research will offer suggestions on how teachers might encourage students to participate more actively in class, even if earlier studies focused on the teacher-student connection in the classroom. Teachers may employ various techniques to do this. However, this study aims to determine whether teachers' self-disclosure (TSD) can inspire students to participate in class actively. When a teacher utilizes SD in class, he or she may share personal anecdotes about themselves or feelings and experiences related to language material. This may result in effective communication that builds trust and rapport between the instructor and the students. When that trust grows, a secure learning environment is created for the teacher and the student (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Students are inspired to discuss how they feel about learning languages, and they begin to communicate in class, proving that SD is contagious (Jourard, 1977, p. 77). According to Weber, Martin, and Cayanus (2005), the more involved students are, the more inclined they are to speak with the teacher. TSD then fosters students' independence and encourages them to participate actively in class. When students began to interact, TSD guided them through consciousness-raising to identify their strengths and those needing more practice. Once this information was obtained, teachers could implement the best strategies, techniques, or even classroom activities to address the student weaknesses they had

discussed in response to TSD. Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions were proposed:

- RQ1: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' self-disclosure and students' motivation for class participation?
- RQ2: Are male and female students' motivation for class participation different regarding the teachers' self-disclosure?

According to the research questions mentioned earlier, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

- H01: There is no significant relationship between teachers' self-disclosure and students' motivation for class participation.
- H02: There is no difference between male and female students' motivation for class participation regarding teachers' self-disclosure.

METHODS

The objective of the current study was to evaluate whether two factors are associated. This refers to determining if an increase or drop in one variable causes an equivalent rise or fall in the other. The correlational design was used to examine the link between two variables, namely self-disclosure, and motivation.

Participants

The present study's statistical population comprised all EFL teachers and students of Urmia English institutes. In this research, the sample size was determined as 28 teachers trained to teach the English language and 108 students. In addition, the subjects were Iranian EFL intermediate students with both male and female genders (age range of 15) educated at Arad, Andishe Sabz-e Ehsan, and Maghreb Zamin English institutes. Their mother language is Turkish or Kurdish. Placement tests given by each institute confirmed the homogeneity of students.

Instrumentation

The following instruments were used to conduct the present study:

1. The Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale was developed by Zhang et al. Twenty items comprise this questionnaire, measuring the teachers' attitudes toward three domains. When Cronbach's Alpha model was performed on the questionnaire, an appropriate Alpha index of 0.832 was achieved, showing that the questionnaire's reliability was satisfactory. To examine the results for the 20-item scale and compare the component loading of the appropriateness of the TSD scale with the loadings provided in the Zhang et al. study, 's Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation of the items was used.
2. The second research variable used the Martin, Mottet, and Myers (1999) Motives to Communicating scale, which has a 30-item form. Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate dependability, which came out to be 0.846. Additionally, the survey's overall reliability was determined to be 0.868, highlighting a sufficient level of reliability.

Procedure

Participants in three language institutes, Arad, Andishe Sabz-e Ehsan, and Maghreb Zamin, were given the questionnaire along with instructions explaining the purpose of the study and how to reply to the items. After that, each participant will finish a survey that includes questions on TSD and how motivated kids are to participate in class activities. In addition to asking students to complete a motivation questionnaire, teachers will also be required to respond to questions on self-disclosure. The researcher supplied the appropriate instructions whenever necessary to ensure that the participants knew what was necessary to complete the questionnaire.

RESULTS

Participants in three language institutes, Arad, Andishe Sabz-e Ehsan, and Maghreb Zamin, were given questionnaires and instructions on the study's goal and how to answer the questions. After that, each participant will be given a survey to complete, which will include questions about TSD and students' drive to participate in class activities. Teachers will be asked to answer questions in a self-disclosure questionnaire, and students will be asked to answer questions in a questionnaire about motivation. Where instructions were required, the researcher gave them in order to ensure that the participants had enough comprehension to complete the questionnaire.

Inferential Statistics

Primarily, K-S (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) test was used to determine the type of variable distribution, namely, normal (parametric) or non-normal (non-parametric). Since the significance level is estimated as 0.58 ($p \text{ value} > 0.05$) confirms the normal data distribution. Therefore, the Pearson correlation coefficient is a suitable test for hypothesis analysis.

The following section analyzes two hypotheses formulated in this study using the Pearson correlation coefficient (to accept or reject the existence of a relationship between variables) and the independent samples t-test (to specify the difference between male and female students' motivation regarding the TSD).

Hypothesis 1

Null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between teachers' self-disclosure and students' motivation for class participation.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between teachers' self-disclosure and students' motivation for class participation.

Statistical hypothesis

$$\begin{cases} H_0: r = 0 \\ H_1: r \neq 0 \end{cases}$$

Table 1

Correlations between Teachers' Self-Disclosure and Students' Motivation for Class Participation

		TSD	Students' Motivation
	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.728**
TSD	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	28	28
	Correlation Coefficient	.728**	1.000
Students' Motivation	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	28	28

Table 1 indicates that the level of significance is 0.000. The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted since the significance level (p-value) is less than 0.05. In other words, there is a strong correlation between TSD and student motivation. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.728 indicates a significant and favorable association between TSD and students' motivation. To put the relationship's strength into simpler terms, a 1 unit rise in TSD causes a 0.728 unit increase in students' motivation.

In this study, scrutinizing different dimensions of TSD (TSD topics, TSD purposes, and TSD considerations) and their relationships with students' motivation showed a significant positive relationship between TSD dimensions and students' motivation.

Hypothesis 2

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between male and female students' motivation for class participation regarding teacher self-disclosure.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant difference between male and female students' motivation for class participation regarding teacher self-disclosure.

Statistical hypothesis

$$\begin{cases} H_0: r = 0 \\ H_1: r \neq 0 \end{cases}$$

The followings are the results of the analysis concerning the second research hypothesis. Tables 2 and 3 represent the descriptive and inferential outcomes, respectively.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics Concerning the Male and Female Students Groups

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Students	Male	54	3.0449	.55236	.08144
	Female	54	3.5177	.65891	.08368

Table 2 shows descriptive outcomes by which the male (mean = 3.0449, SD = 0.55236, Std. Mean = 0.8144) and female (Mean = 3.5177, SD = 0.65891, Std. Mean = 08368) students groups were compared by using independent samples t-test. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

The Results of Independent Samples T-test Regarding the Difference between Male and Female Students' Motivation for Class Participation Regarding Teacher Self-Disclosure

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Students	Equal variances assumed	1.813	.181	-3.945	106	.000	-.47281	.11986	-.71045	-.23518
	Equal variances not assumed.			-4.049	106	.000	-.47281	.11677	-.70436	-.24127

The second research question is posed after determining whether there are any differences between male and female students' motivation for class involvement related to the professors' self-disclosure. As shown in Table 3, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected because there are no significant differences between male and female students' motivation for class participation regarding the teachers' self-disclosure. This is because the level of significance (the independent t-test) for the difference between perceptions of the male and female students is determined to be 0.181 (greater than 0.05).

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Overall, teaching English in the Iranian context has had several serious shortcomings. Teachers must enhance how they instruct students. The findings of this study demonstrated that teachers' candor regarding their motivations for teaching English can benefit students. It follows that teachers can use it to dispel the misguided beliefs of cynical students who see language

acquisition as an impassable challenge. The way a teacher reveals themselves can significantly impact how pupils approach language acquisition or the methods they use to do so, providing them with fresh insight.

Students are more likely to participate in class actively and ask questions pertinent to the course when teachers self-disclose and the students perceive such disclosures as relevant. Students appear more motivated to participate actively in the learning process when professors' self-disclosures are relevant instead of when they are not. Students do not believe that their lecturers only deliver stories to them. Instead, they interpret pertinent self-disclosures as their professors' efforts to foster a supportive, honest learning environment. Additionally, pupils are less likely to interact when the teacher's self-disclosures seem irrelevant.

It is best to present self-disclosure in courses covering psycholinguistics and educational philosophy because it is a topic in psychology connected to language learning and instruction. The books on second/foreign language teaching techniques can include an introduction to the teacher's self-disclosure. Therefore, this issue should be considered by the experts in materials development for second/foreign language education.

The relationship between TSD and students' motivation was the subject of the first study topic. There is a relationship, as shown by the Pearson correlation coefficient results ($p < 0.05$). According to Zhang, Shi, and Hao (2009), teacher disclosure motivates students, grabs their attention, and builds teacher-student relationships. According to Cayanus, Matthew, and Goodboy (2009), the educator's self-disclosure acts as a tool to encourage students' willingness to learn and take part in various activities during the courses. Additionally, according to McBride and Wahl (2015), teachers can utilize their disclosure to grab students' attention, foster a climate of trust in the classroom, and motivate them to participate in the lesson actively. The research above supports the current study's findings, which indicate that self-disclosure is crucial to language teaching and learning when increasing students' motivation and engagement is the main focus. In order to ascertain whether male and female students had distinct attitudes about a teacher disclosing information, a second study question was developed. The results of the independent sample t-test showed that there is no difference in this area ($p > 0.05$). Matulaitiene and Paluckaite (2016) came to the same result, finding that both male and female students view a teacher's self-disclosure as a method of imparting information and personal experience. The findings of the current study are supported by a study conducted by Kuan, Teng, Hong, and Fong (2017) that revealed no gender differences in teacher self-disclosure and teacher credibility.

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